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Subject : Cause and Cure of Corruption in Public Affairs.

PLYMOUTH PULPIT:

A Weekly Publication

OF

SERMONS

PREACHED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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CAUSE AND CURE OF CORRUPTION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS.

"That thou mayst walk in the way of good men, and keep the paths of the righteous. For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it."—Prov. ii., 20-22.

This is a kind of summary of the moral principle involved in the exhortations and reasonings which precede it.

The writer had seen a great deal of civil life, and a great many of the developments of human nature, in the ways of ambition, in the ways of pleasure, in the ways of turbulence and war, and in the ways of corruption and avarice; and you shall find, in the times of the kings of Israel, descriptions of things that are taking place now, and have taken place in every age, in luxurious and wealthy communities, oftentimes indicating, if possible, greater depths of wickedness than any that nature or history in recent times have recorded. Only a few verses preceding these, in the first chapter, we have this passage:

"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause: let us swallow them up alive as the grave; and whole, as those that go down into the pit: we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil: cast in thy lot among us; let us have one purse: my son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: for their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood."

Old nations were not organized as highly as ours are; and the State itself was almost unknown. There were royal treasures; but the communities were almost always poor; and although there was great swindling in the levying and expenditure of taxes, yet that was not a way in which men could very much get rich. They had other ways of doing it. They marked rich men here and there and elsewhere; they plotted their downfall; they whispered in the ears of the king suspicions of treason, of infidelity, and procured some unjust sentence, and swept down the man, and swallowed up.

SUNDAY EVENING, Oct. 1, 1871. Lesson: Luke XIII., 1-17. Hymns (Plymouth Collection), Nos. 865, 947, 1034.

his estate, gorging all the profits. Pushed out from high estate and influence, and disgraced, others sucked out all his substance. It was only another way of doing the same thing which we see done nowadays. Blood-suckers then were just the same as blood-suckers now. We in this age suck blood, and they in that age sucked blood; only then they sucked it from one side, and now we suck it from another side. The sucking was the same.

You shall find in other places in the word of God—particularly in Isaiah—delineations which seem to show that there was the same want of public conscience; that there was the same prostration of justice; that the forms of justice were employed to destroy the thing itself; that government, which was set against misrule, was actively employed in misruling; and that magistrates and judges appointed for integrity and the execution of righteousness, became themselves the greatest culprits and criminals.

“Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men. We roar all like bears.”

The bold folks, that are indignant, and protest, would be glad to grind in their teeth and crush in their paws, public transgressors.

“We roar all like bears——”
about as clumsily, and about as intelligently. Then there is a softer sort:

“And we mourn sore, like doves.”

Such a pity! so bad! so wicked!

Some break out into turbulent oaths, and would like to bring fire on the rascals' heads; and others feel so badly that it should be so. Oh, the sentimentality and the indignation!

“We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us: for our transgressions are with us; and as for our iniquities, we know them. In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.”

There is inspiration in that. While the community were infested with great and flagrant criminals, the prophet turned round and said, “These men exist because we are wicked. It is our laxity of conscience; it is our want of moral principle; it is our infidelity to

our trust, to the State, which God has put into our hands, that is the reason of such outbreking iniquity."

There is nothing more striking than the stubbornness, if I may so say, with which the word of God has borne, in every age, testimony to the ruinousness of wrong courses, and to the safety and peace and joyfulness of moral rectitude. There is nothing which seems so absurd in times when the wicked flourish, as that a course of truth-speaking and fidelity is the best course. Crooked ways seem to be successful ways. And yet, from beginning to end, without a solitary exception, the various books of the Bible, written hundreds of years apart, and each by different men, agree in this one central proposition. After a thousand years the earliest books were written; and the experience of the world thus far justified the declaration that the way of peace is always a way of honesty and truth; and that the way of dishonesty and untruth is always a turbulent way. A thousand more years rolled round, and new observations had been taken during that time; and another writer sprang up, and said, as the result of those observations, "They prosper in the long run, who have a pure conscience and live uprightly; and they who forsake the way of the Lord, though for the time being they seem to be prosperous, shall come to an end speedily." Another thousand years rolled away, and men who looked on the face of the human race cried out again, as the result of that additional experience, the same words. And so generation has declared to generation, and age to age, and thousand years to thousand years, that the way of happiness lies in integrity, and that the forsaking of that way, either in private or public life, is the broad road the beginnings of which are pleasant and flowery, but which end in disaster and darkness and overthrow.

I need not say that I have entered upon this subject on account of that which has filled the thoughts and occupied the conversations of men for many months past—the condition of affairs in the City of New York; the disclosures which have been made; the shock which has been produced; the anger, the fear, the suffering, the thousand conflicting feelings. It seems to me that it is a part of the duty of a faithful minister into whose hands is placed the truth of God to apply to the consciences of men, not to let go by, without calling your attention to it, a subject so important, or a crisis of events so tremendous. If, however, you expect me to join in the hue and cry, I shall not do it.

"Those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell ye Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

I regard the culprits in these flagrant transactions as so many boils and carbuncles ; as so many points where the diseases of the body emptied themselves. The whole body was full of morbid matter, and these were the places where it was manifested. They are notorious criminals, that *are criminal* ; but they represent in a sad way the average condition of the communities in which they dwell. The permissions, the lowness of moral sentiment, the neglects, the various forms of positive wrong, which are winked at, indulged, in others, without blame, or are actively employed by ourselves—these have conspired to the production of diseases which we all of us feel to be a shame and a disgrace.

I trust that those men who have been the leaders or prime participators in these things have suffered, not simply the fear of detection, but also remorse, and some pangs remedial ; and it is not for me to add epithets to those which have already been plentifully heaped upon them, but to attempt to look into the causes of such things, and see whether we have any duties in the premises.

Nations are like individuals in this respect, that they are liable to cycles of diseases. It is true that nations who live on a low plane, and who are not very much excited by civilization, who are not educated, and who therefore live a kind of routine and torpid life, are oftentimes relatively free from many of the vices that affect energetic and civilized nations. So you shall frequently find nations far below us in civilization in whom the virtues of truth-speaking and fidelity and honesty are conspicuously superior to our own. Many persons deride Christianity for that reason. We are, however, to take into consideration that anything which rouses up the whole energy of men gives a potency to every part of their nature. Civilization does not confine itself to intellectual activity. Even moral culture does not stop with moral culture. You cannot bring to bear a powerful influence on the higher nature of man without in some degree, also, raising the energy and strength of the whole nervous system—of the whole cerebral mass. Therefore communities, great in intelligence and moral power, are apt to be great, likewise, in basilar directions. The unregulated power developed by civilization we have not yet learned to restrain, to coerce, to utilize, if I may so say.

A community that lives on a low plane of civilization is like a canal. It is very useful, but homely. There is nothing romantic about it. It is very safe. It has no dangerous storms or freshets on it. Active communities that live on a high plane of civilization are under a great stress. Like rivers, they are useful and grand, but are subject to wasting freshets which rise in their wrath, and overflow

the banks, and subside again. And I think that rivers are better than canals, though canals *are* a little safer.

Hence we are not to be surprised that in Christian communities there are developments of an alarming kind. No nation ever existed that did not run through series and cycles of moral diseases. Sometimes it is the disease of war. In lower states both civil and foreign war are apt to break out. In history the moral life of nations seems peculiarly addicted to this disease. Then we pass away from that, and there come terms of riotousness and turbulence. Nations pass through these as children pass through the measles, the chicken-pox, and the whooping-cough. Such diseases many nations pass through without being destroyed by them. Nations pass through periods of luxurious corruption, extravagance, and unbounded expenditure. It swells and swells for a time, it increases like a fever, rising in spite of all resistance, and comes to its maximum; and then it breaks, and passes off, and a better state of things comes in. Nations have spasms of avarice; and under its baleful influence the most outrageous proceedings come to be tolerated, and make headway. But a nation that has a substantial moral constitution is able to bear these things. We are able to bear them.

I am greatly comforted by the history of England. We come from her stock. The periods of corruption which the English nation have passed through are a consolation to us. There have been times in the history of England when bribery was almost the law, and honor was the exception. There have been times when gigantic speculations cut down private fortunes as the scythe cuts down the grass of the field. There have been times of turbulence and outrage. There have been times when the most despicable swindling operations have been carried on, and vast fortunes have been accumulated which absorbed innumerable minor fortunes. All these things have existed in the English nation, and it has overcome them. And we are of that nation. We inherit her faults as well as her virtues. And when I see bribery among electors here, I do not say that it is going to destroy us. It will destroy us if it is not checked, but it will be checked. There is recuperative energy in this stock. When I see gigantic bribery in commercial matters I am not alarmed. I should be alarmed if I did not believe that it would be checked and remedied; but I do believe that it will be checked and remedied. I am not, therefore, discouraged, but am hopeful. I am confident that long before we see the way to get over it we shall get over it. We shall go back to public honesty. Even politics will be purer than they have been. Commerce will be more honest than it has been. The time will come when you, or your children, will see an honest government in the city of New York!

When these periods, however, fall due, men wake up from their lethargy—men without much reading and with little instruction—and are filled with all manner of alarm, unreasoning and unreasonable, and sometimes with indignation. There has been enough indignation poured out on the culprits of New York, if it had been felt before, and distributed among the population equitably, to have saved us from the difficulty. This indignation of conscience after the offense is very well; but a foregoing conscience that has indignation against possible evils, and prevents them, is more profitable. I do not wonder at the indignation; nor do I wonder at the anger; nor should I restrain it; but still, we ought not to spend all the indignation and anger on those who have done the wrong. It is a partnership. There is some of your blood, and some of mine, in every one of those thieving rascals. We are their fathers. It is said to be a wise son that knows his father; but there are a great many of you of whom it may be said that you do not know your own sons. We breed felons when we permit, or in minor matters set on foot, those causes which issue in the production of laxness in public or commercial life.

In part we owe the present condition of public feeling and public morals to the influence and the inoculation which this nation has received from slavery. Slavery would not have been the atrocious evil that it proved to be, if it had not left its victims imbruted; if it had not left the communities very much weakened commercially, and political economy in every respect defiled; if it had not spread its virus secretly and in every direction throughout the great body politic. Because slavery was bad, it does not follow that all the evils which flowed out of that feculent morass have been destroyed. The conscience brought up under slavery remains behind. The morals that were bred during the maintenance of that institution remain behind. That certain gigantic violation of rectitude which came to be recognized by our Constitution, and permitted by all our public men—by generation after generation of men, who grew up accustoming themselves to see every right that belonged to humanity systematically violated and trod upon—that will not be corrected in the lifetime of the men so educated. We have come into our present state and condition very much influenced (and not the less because imperceptibly influenced) by that low, torpid, I might say typhoid conscience, which grew up under the influence of slavery.

We also owe much of the present lax condition of morals in business and civil administration to the effect which the war produced upon us. Every physician knows that many remedies which destroy the diseases leave behind a medicinal disease: It is true that while

some powerful remedies tend to cure the disease which a man has suffered, afterward he has to get over the medicine as well.

Now war was a medicine. It was a cup in the right hand of God mingled in the fierceness of his indignation; and we drank it; and it cured us; but we are getting over the medicine now. It was impossible to introduce suddenly a new state of things, and break up all the habits of men. Men depend largely upon conventions for morality. Habits are, as it were, guides and prophets to men. It is as impossible to lift a great nation up suddenly without disturbing its foundations, as it is for an earthquake to lift a village without cracking or weakening any of its walls. To take a nation reaching from the Atlantic to the Mississippi and dash together the two great sections thereof without the shocking and shattering, the dislocation and unsettling of men, is far beyond any power which we are capable of measuring. And the prevalence of a law of physical force in distinction from public sentiment and civil custom, brought a certain mischief which could not be readily or easily obviated. Large fortunes were made, and the accumulating element was introduced into business affairs; and the settling back of the nation to the old foundation produced a state of things that it might be supposed would come in the form of such flagrant iniquities as we see breaking out all over the land.

This state of things, however, was not brought on by slavery and developed by war alone. We are to look for the causes of the distemperature in public affairs more minutely. It indicates a great remissness in the family itself; a great want of right teaching on the part of parents; a great lack of that old-fashioned, sturdy honor and honesty which used to prevail. There was a time when men felt that frugal living, accompanied by intelligence and high moral character, was the best estate. Parents taught their children so, and practiced what they taught. Children at the table heard discourse that befitted Rome in her best days of frugality and independence. And these qualities were among the noble virtues of New England and of the Middle and Northern States. Men were brought up in earlier times to this kind of education little by little. But prosperity and the infection of outside ideas has changed it. There has been a growing feeling that power and wealth were necessary. Parents have winked at this feeling in their families. There has not been that deep, solemn inculcation of personal virtues as indispensable to any permanent prosperity in life which there used to be. And children have grown up, not as much afraid of sin as they were, but with a notion that there has been exercised over-rigidity and puritanic strictness. And the family has failed to do its great office-work in these directions.

Then there has been a want of right teaching in the pulpit. There was a time when there were no public mischiefs which were not discussed in the pulpit. In the earlier days of New England and the Colonies, it was understood that the minister was bound not only to lay before his congregation their personal sins, but to attack all manner of corruption in the community, whether it belonged to commerce or politics or any other department of human procedure. In the course of time, however, commerce and politics became interested in the maintenance of slavery; and the pulpit became, first, silent in regard to it, then, an apologist for it, and then an advocate of it. And with this failure to teach the community their civic duties began the relinquishment by the community of their stern integrity, and men became more and more corrupt. In the place of practical preaching on special morals, the pulpit dealt more and more in sentimental generalities or dry intellectual propositions; and the people went unfed; and the impression which they received was that it was possible for great transgressors to flourish.

We are in part to blame who have had households to bring up; and we are in part to blame who have been ministers to congregations.

These are merely the exhibitions, then, of human nature, which we see when the restraints are taken off. When the truths of religion are not faithfully applied, men spring up in depravities and sins as aforetime.

Not only that, but from this laxity of instruction at home, and this want of a more sturdy morality in the pulpit—especially of what are called *common* morals—truth, fidelity, honesty, honor in common things—in short, integrity—there has come up a public sentiment so thin, so impoverished in blood, if I may say, as not to be able to maintain honesty in the community. The result has been, that in our business, from beginning to end, we have permitted the practice of fraud and dishonesty.

Now, nothing requires truth so much in the inward nature as credit; and business above all other things, stands upon credit. Credit requires that a man should be true; that his word should be as good as his bond; that he should mean right; and that if he goes wrong it shall be by mistake. In a nation, credit requires openness. It requires that a man's way and his intention should be open, frank, and apparent. Anything that tends to destroy integrity in the individual, so far tends to destroy credit in business.

I need not tell you how commerce is invested, and how it has permitted itself to be overborne, with corrupt tendencies. I need

not tell you that many and many business establishments have been schools of equivocation and deceit and immorality. Every man who winks in his business at fraud, every man who mixes up the conduct of his business with lies and dishonesty, no matter how small the thread may be which he is spinning for the fabric of evil which is being woven, becomes *particeps criminis* with those men who break out in positive mischief. Do you think it is such an awful thing to steal? Do you hound after the men who have stolen, crying, "Thieves! thieves! thieves?" Why, a man who puts his hand up to his shoulder into his neighbor's chest and pulls out bags of gold, is no more a thief than the man who, with his delicate thumb and finger, takes out a pinch of his neighbor's gold. You think that the former is a profitable thief because he takes a big pile, and the latter a contemptible one because he takes only a pinch; but every man who sells by false weight, who deals in false goods, who cheats in the appearance of his goods; every man who lies to his customers, and manufactures fraudulently, and distributes fraudulently what he manufactures, has given a drop of blood to these miscreants, and has joint parentage in them. You have been preparing for such things. Business has been the anvil on which has been beaten out these superlative villains.

"Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

Think ye that those six or seven on whom the *New York Times* has fallen, are sinners above all that dwell in New York? Nay. I say to every man that smuggles goods; to every man that sells on false invoices; to every man that fashions things deceitfully; to every man that carries on business which he is afraid to have the light of God's eye rest upon; to every man who swears falsely in regard to his affairs, and gives in a false account of his income; to every man who hides his prosperity to get rid of paying his lawful and just taxes—I say to every such man, You are as guilty as these *detected* villains. Ah! if all the men who have been guilty of fraud in New York were to have a tower fall on them, there would be funerals for fifty years to come!

When we organize deceit; when it is thought that a man may be respectable who is known to heap up money by most disreputable courses; when we take a man by his property, instead of by his character; when in business circles things that are atrocious in their nature, such as the tripping up of men unawares, are tolerated; when in the bank, in the broker's office, in the importer's or retailer's store, or in the street, such things are known, and become so smooth that, as even in my own case, it is not considered a thing surprising

to offer a minister two bills—one to pay on, and the other to run to the Custom House with; when men have almost lost the sense of honor and honesty; when the community is a dung-hill, a hot-bed, as it were, of corruption; and when at last here and there men break out into ravening, then do you think it is fitting for the whole community to prey upon them, and visit them with a fiery storm, as though they were the only culpable ones? They are criminals; but they are only mirrors that you may see yourself in. Look at them, and see what you are when you are dishonest. Look at them, and see what you are when you swindle your neighbor's store. That is all they have done. Look at them and see what you are when you cheat at the Custom House. That is all they have done. Look at them, and see what you are when you swear falsely in regard to taxation. That is all they have done. What have they done? Stolen? So have you. Lied? So have you. Been false to their oaths? So have you. Men might have necklaces of beads almost uncountable representing their wrong deeds, and they would not all be represented. One string about their neck could not carry them all.

It is notorious, flagrant laxity of morals in business that breeds these things. And when you are looking about for the cure, and asking, "Do you think they will be able to get a hold on them?" "Do you think they will be able to bring them to justice?" do you want all the criminals brought to justice? Do you want God to lay judgment to the line? Do you want the wrong traced back to business, and to the operators in business? Are you willing to face God, and your own enlightened conscience in the presence of Almighty God? Have you not something to say respecting your own deeds as school-masters of villains?

I would not have you judge any less severely of the flagrancy of these public crimes; but I would have you intensify in yourselves the sense of the fact that multitudes of you are proceeding on principles identical with those on which these men are proceeding; that you have the same tendencies to want of virtue that they have; and that you owe your integrity and respectability much more to circumstances than to conscience.

Men say, "You cannot conduct business according to a straight rule. There must be equivocation." That is between you and the judgment-day. My business is not to gloze over these things. I believe that truth and fair-dealing are in the long run the best, and that any business which cannot be conducted on that ground ought not to be conducted at all. A man who cannot prosper in that way ought not to prosper.

Neither ought we to be surprised, it seems to me, when we consider what has been the conduct of political affairs among men, what has been the abuse of trust, what has been the judgment of the public about right and wrong in regard to public affairs, and what are the ideas into which the young are educated. What is politics? It is supposed to be a game, and at that a game of cunning; a gambler's game; a game of cards; a game of loaded dice; a game in this respect, that the lower instincts, the basilar faculties, largely predominate in the conduct of public affairs. It has come to be believed that shrewdness in public life must be winked at; that you cannot pull up the tares without pulling up the wheat also. I admit that the community is woven together, good and bad, and that to pull out a bad thread is to leave a hole, and spoil the fabric; nevertheless, while you cannot control these things, it is in the power of the individual citizen to intend rectitude himself, and not venture upon anything but the strictest honesty in the conduct of public affairs. If there is anything that should touch the conscience, it is the idea of serving faithfully the whole body politic. There is something noble in the conception of a *commonwealth*.

Have you ever looked upon New York at night as the moon silvered all the scene in that great city. Living on the Heights, I have, many and many a time; and I have thought of the households; of the sweet sleeping children that filled the chambers; of the sad cases of sickness that were there; of the repose of fatigued honest laborers, resting for the morning. I have thought of what a mass of sentient humanity lay at rest, with only the all-loving God to take care of them. And then the thought of that providence which cared for the whole, even as the father cares for the children in the family, rose in strange beauty in my mind. And nothing seemed more truly godlike than the spirit that led one to look comprehensively on the whole community with a feeling of tenderness, and of sympathy for individual need and suffering.

This is a truly heroic and far from romantic notion of patriotism—the love of country. Many a man loves his country so that he will die for it in battle, but not enough to serve it honestly in peace. Our young men, if foreign men surprise our flag, will beat down all such aggression; but then, will they give their life to the noble service of purity? and for it will they refuse to be biased? Will each of them attempt to make one citizen like an iron link in a chain perfect? Too many of our young men are brought up to think that parties are of more use to them than country; that they can employ them to promote their own personal welfare. They see in politics a way of making money, and they accept it, with all its plottings, and

underminings, and various iniquities. So they serve themselves while their fellow men and the community itself are suffering.

Take, for instance, civic life in Brooklyn. Look at the way in which men will take advantage of the necessities of the whole community. If it is in the power of men to get possession of an article which is indispensable to the community, and put three, four, five hundred per cent. profit on it, they will do it. And there is no redress for such extortion. If men can charge five or six times the value of a thing, or levy blackmail, they do not lose the opportunity. If men can milk their fellowmen, stealing, in a safe way, their substance, no sense of right or justice will prevent their doing it. And these things are winked at. If a man who is ignorant and corrupt is elected to office, we take off our hats to him, because he may be able to dock our taxes.

And so men are robbing the community all the way through. They organize a system of spoils, by a majority here and there; and they are filled full of frauds. And by and by when a man a little more comprehensive, and organized a little more skillfully, carries off the very gates of the Treasury, as did Sampson the Gates of Gaza, on his back, we atone for our misdeeds by crying out, "Thief! thief! thief! thief!" As if that man were more a thief than you are! As if that man stole, and you did not steal! As if he connived at stealing, and you did not connive at stealing!

Such men are boils breaking out on the body politic. You are the body, and they are the boils. Look at these men and their deeds, and you will see yourself, and the way you have been acting—only you are disguising it, and making believe you did not, or not admitting it to yourself. We talk about "yellow-covered literature." If God were to turn the leaves of the book of your inward life—of your vain desires; of your burning avarice; of your tergiversations; of your ten thousand connivances with dishonesty—and were to read that book, it would be the blackest lettered literature that ever you saw.

These things are true, and they are things which it behooves every good citizen to consider. Not that these public criminals are not criminals.

"Those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

There are many other sources from which, more or less, these faults spring. I will not weary you by a protracted analysis of them, because I wish to indicate one or two points of remedy.

First, it is not enough that we should oust the culpable men.

Other men will do the same things which they have done after they are gone, if the same influences are allowed to fester and work.

The old carcass lies decaying in the sun. It is covered all over with vermin. Go to-day and cleanse it, removing every maggot. Take them all away, and leave it clean. Go back again to-morrow, and there will be as many more. The carrion corruption is there which breeds vermin. Through every one of these men, as some ill-advised persons have suggested, were hung to a lamp-post before his own door, as an example; or, though they were convicted, and were obliged to disgorge, and Sing Sing were engorged, what then? The same conscience remaining, and the same facilities for fraud remaining, would you be any better off? Now you have men tolerably full; then you would have men tolerably empty; and the same thing would be gone through with again. It would be an illustration of the tale in *Æsop's Fables*, where it is said that an old swarm of flies do not take much blood, but that new ones coming, additional blood is required to fill them.

These men should be made examples of. They should be tried and convicted and punished. They should be punished not only by public sentiment, but by public law. If there was ever a case for punishment this is one. But that is not going to cure the evil. The law cannot cure it. *You* must cure it. A part of the cure lies in your heart; a part of it in your family; a part of it in the common schools; a part of it in the newspapers; a part of it here in this place, and in me, as your public teacher; a part of it in the churches; and a part of it in the community. We must all of us take hold in earnest in this matter. It will not be sufficient to cleanse the outside of affairs and leave the inside full of corruption. I do not think that a momentary clapping of the hands, and hurrahing, and a going back, then, every man to his business, and forgetting the evil, will ever cleanse the body politic.

We must, therefore, men and brethren, take hold of this as school work and church work, and as the work of every citizen in the commonwealth. There must be a higher sense of honor. There must be an ambition of integrity. Somehow or other there must come up a public sentiment that shall hold a man who speaks the truth to be better than a man who does not. There must be such a distinction made between integrity and want of integrity that everybody shall feel it. You must emphasize moral qualities more. It is sad to reflect that a good quality, or a good character, is no more held in esteem by the community than a bad one. It is a humiliating fact that it is coming to be regarded that the better men are the worse their chances are, and that it is said, "I cannot be a needle;

I must be a thread ; for if I am to go in and out, I must be supple, and bend so as to accommodate myself to the structure which I am drawn through."

The nation must be made to understand, fathers and mothers, that a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Bread is good ; but we are told that men shall not live by bread alone. Riches are good ; but riches do not feed sentiment. It is good for a man to have political power ; but mere political power cannot build up the foundations of true manhood. There must be more integrity at the root. There must be more faith.

I would not draw away from your soul the intense conviction that you need spiritual religion ; but I would emphasize the fact that no spiritual religion has any roots in you which is not founded in most rigorous morals. And these terrible revelations which have been made, while on the one side they excite my indignation, on the other excite deep sympathy in me.

You know that I have been blamed for severity and vehemence and denunciation. Yes, when everybody else was still, I did speak, and I spoke loud ; but now, when everybody else is making a racket, I feel more like comforting those who are cast down. So far as I can do it in consistency with public justice, I would stand by their side, that they be not overwhelmed. For they are men ; and they suffer, many of them, doubtless, as you never suffered. I would not forget in the culprit the humanity. I would look as I suppose God looks upon the great sinning world, abhorring iniquity, and longing to save men out of it. I look upon men who in many respects have good qualities, and long for their redemption. And I would take part of the blame myself. I would also distribute part of it on you.

Fathers, mothers, fellow-citizens, men, brethren, countrymen, is it not time for us to take hold of hands for more integrity ; for more purity in business and politics and statesmanship ; for a higher standard of morals in everything and everywhere ; for more noble manhood ; for a better life, serving God by temporal things, as well as by prayers and hymns and spiritual songs. If there shall rise up such a correction of public sentiment, not only will there be less corruption, but there will be less tendency of the body politic to break out in these sores and consummate themselves.

There is no showy service that I call you to. I call you to no public demonstrations or meetings. I simply call you to the humble and necessary work of self-examination. I press upon you the duties of manhood. I urge you to bear witness to truth and honor and integrity. I hold up before you the need of purifying the

house, the store, and everything you touch in politics or public affairs. And it is not possible that living men should do that, and adhere to it, and exert themselves for it, without soon finding that the tide is turning, and that we have gone over this depression, and that the whole system has risen to a higher tone and a healthier condition.

May God inspire us to true patriotism as a part of our piety; and after spending the remainder of our years in usefulness here, may we rise to a nobler service in the world beyond.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Because thou art merciful, slow to anger, gracious to forgive, O Lord our God, we are not consumed. We are not permitted to draw near to thee because we are better than others. We do not come feeling our innocence, nor conscious of any merit. We come burdened with a sense of evil. We come deeply repenting of transgression. We know that we are joined to the whole race in their weakness and in their fallibleness, and that with them we have broken thy law, sinned, done evil in thy sight, and that we are altogether unlovely. We cannot ask thee to love us because we are lovable. We look away from ourselves wholly to that which is in thee. We can scarcely understand the greatness of that nature which can comprehend things so diverse, and bear with those who are so unlovely, and so false to everything that is divine. Thou takest into the great arms of thy love, and into the bosom of thy goodness those who are far from thee—yea, those who are even enemies, that contest purity, and resist good, and are unwilling to become good. Thou dost warm them by thy heart; thou dost spare them by thy mercy; thou dost build them up both outwardly and inwardly; thou art preparing them to love that which is good. We desire to belong to that number. We see that we are most unworthy; we see how prone to earth we are; we see how again we are drawn back by fatal gravitation; we see that our steps are slow, and that not unfrequently we go in wrong ways. Yet, we do not love the evil nor the wrong, but turn from it with confessions of sorrow, and with humiliation, and come back to the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. We cannot ask thee even to judge us by that which is best in our best hours. But thou art good, and thou art the cause of that which is good in us. By the grace of God we are what we are—not by truth, nor by fidelity, nor by good intentions. With ourselves is the non-performing; with thee the attainment. With us is the evil; with thee the grace. With us is all that is selfish and untoward; with thee all that is forgiving and most glorious in mercy. Such a one thou art, O Lord our God, as we need. By help obtained of thee we have continued thus far; and by thy grace we must go to the end. Impart to every one of us the desire to avoid that which is wrong. Grant us forgiveness that we ever attempt to hide our sins from thee. May we, rather, try to turn away from them. May the abhorrence of evil in ourselves grow stronger and stronger. May we love that which is good, and cleave to it. May we grow more and more sensitive to that which is right. May we love justice, and legislate it, and learn to carry it forward beyond the measure of ordinary men. May we seek to be more generous, more noble, more sincere, more upright, more transparently truthful than other men require us to be. May we seek to fashion ourselves before thine eye and

by thy teachings, so that when we come into judgment we shall not be judged by the measure of human law, but by the measure of thy law.

O Lord our God, we pray that thou wilt have compassion upon those who are tempted more than they are able to bear. Open a door of escape for them. Grant that those who tempt may be baffled, and that all snares, and pit-falls, and traps, and devices of wicked men for their greedy gains, and for the destruction of their victims, may come to naught. Surely, in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. May the snares of evil men become apparent to those for whom they are set.

We pray that thou wilt help all those who seek to mend the evil, and correct the things that are wrong. Bless those who labor for the promotion of temperance; for the moderation of evil desires; for the restoration of those that have stumbled and fallen, and are not able to restore themselves. Bless the labors of those that seek the welfare of the community; that endeavor to cleanse its thoroughfares; that would elevate more and more the consciences of men who are acting in public.

We pray that thou wilt stretch forth thy hand over this great people, and restore them again to justice as they were in the beginning. Give us wise magistrates, incorrupt judges, and pure citizenship. More and more may men strive together for the things which are honest and of good report.

And we pray that intelligence may spread, that schools may more and more be fostered in every neighborhood, and that men may not be entrapped by ignorance or superstition and every form of wickedness which comes unawares. We pray that men may be exalted and strengthened in their nobler parts, and enabled to control that which is best in themselves.

And may not this nation grow overripe or rotten in its prosperity. Thou hast planted it as a tree by the living waters. Behold how broad are the branches that come out from it, and that shall reach from ocean to ocean. Grant that this tree may be as a tree of life on the earth. How many mischiefs have come from the strength of nations that lifted themselves up in their greatness and trampled down those around about them! Let this nation stand, we pray thee, conspicuous for integrity; for mercy; for humanity; for liberty; for sympathy with all that need sympathy. And we pray that its mission in the earth may be one of peace and of righteousness.

We beseech of thee to purify thy churches of every name. Give a better and nobler temper to those who minister in righteousness. Wilt thou have all the earth before thee in compassion every day. For the whole earth is sick. All things strive against thee. Thou that hast been the Master of ages gone by—wilt thou not still guide this world in ages yet to come? Though the storm be severe? though the winds be loud, and though thou art seemingly asleep, rise thou that dost command all things, and there shalt be a calm, and the ship shall come safely to her harbor. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We ask it in the name of the Beloved, to whom, with the Father and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

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